

## Chicago Sending Conference 9/12/08-9/14/08

### Saturday, September 13

8:30 Opening

Intros/Icebreaker: find a partner 4 fun facts:

1. name and where you are from
2. favorite place you visited
- 3.
4. What you hope to get out of the weekend:

Scholarship info

All the new info

Get to know new staff/volunteers

Energized

New structures

**Session:** State of AFS-USA Sending

**Facilitator:** Jonathan Shakes

What Should We Focus On?

- 2008 Sending fell by 6 % resulting in a \$400,000 budget cut
- AFS dominates the market place in Year Programs, AFS has 40%
- long year programs are the preferred ones to promote: better language learning, more impact , we own the market on these longer programs, margins are higher

So What Should We Focus On? (discussion)

- Kansas City is experiencing success in marketing to more diverse lower income groups
- Need to increase efficiency and prioritize
- Don't lose sight of the summer programs—good entrée into the experience
- Using returnees as recruiters
- Are we focusing on using technology through facebook and non print media ?
- Sell longer programs
- Engage more volunteers
- Inspire more future volunteers
- Reduce program costs
- Understand this generation of AFSers
- Semester and Year Long Programs- There is a better chance that long term relationships will form with friends and host families. A longer opportunity to study a language and become more fluent.
- Hook students with Summer Programs, as they may want to experience a Year Program once they have been abroad.
- Better utilize Returnees as recruiters
- Utilize AFS Facebook, Youtube, and other multimedia forms
- Promote longer programs
- Engage Volunteers and inspire more volunteers

- Reduce program costs
- Understand potential “larval AFSers”
- Inform Volunteers
  - More feedback to local volunteers
  - Inform local volunteers when students return from their programs so they can help target them as new volunteers, and specifically to increase sending volunteers
  - Increase efficiency and effectiveness of volunteers and staff

**Session:** Review of 2008

**Facilitator:** Mitch Crain

#### QUIZ PORTION

- In 2008, 1507 students were sent abroad.
- In 2008, 336 students were sent from the central region
- The Central Region did not meet the goal. The goal was 424.
- AFS-USA national also did not meet its goal, which was 1625 students.
- Texas Gulf Coast sent the most students with 52.
- The Greater West Metro Area Team sent the most year program students in the Central Region with 16.
- In 2008, 40 countries are hosting US students.
- There are 144 programs that AFS students can choose from
- Tunisia, Indonesia, and Peru are three countries that are being added as 2009 destinations for US sending students.
- In 2008, Italy received more students than any other.
- Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Mexico receive the fewest US students in 2008, each receiving one.

#### Brainstorm of Current Activities

Web site developed in Chicago

Orientations—include sending families and students

Invite returnees to every function to help them get involved as volunteers

9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade classroom 20 minute presentations ( Michigan)

- Collaborate with Pennies for Peace -Greg Mortenson program—( check out website )
- Presentations to school boards, leaders to get access into schools and organizations
- Using hosted students to give presentations
- Outreach to parents
- Outreach to younger students –planting seeds
- Pen-pal program
- Girl scouts –CBO’s
- International events-festivals-food cultural sharing –booths
- Exchange weekends /short-term weekends
- Get in touch with returnees right away
- Have 3 orientations and include potential AFSers
- School lead sheets

- Info nights held 2 weeks after AFS school presentations (especially when the school presenter can notify the classes of the upcoming info night)
- Presentations to School Boards
- 15 minute school presentations
- Present in schools that are hosting
- Presentations for parents, include Hosting and Sending Parents and Returnees
- Go through the Foreign Language Department to get school presentations
- Go through the Social Studies Departments to get school presentations
- Plant the seeds early- present in middle and elementary schools
- Set up middle school age pen-pals between the US and another country where AFS has students
- Present to Girl and Boy Scout Clubs
- Present at different “Festival of Nations”
- Host “Exchange Weekends”
  - A great way to find future host families
  - Both hosted student and hosting siblings
- Contact families after students are abroad
- Host mid-year retreats
- Get Hosted and Sending students, along with their families, together
- Invite Returnees and Sending Families to every event
- Have Hosted students go into elementary schools to talk to the students/do cultural activities with them, or fundraisers like “Pennies for Peace” (based off of the novel “Three Cups of Tea”)

**Session:** 2009 Key Strategic Changes- #1 Paying the Program Fee

Refer to Scholarship power point on Wiki for more detail

**Facilitator:** Rick Landrum

AFS GLOBAL LEADERS SCHOLARSHIPS – it’s new!

Benefits:

Apply online

Four different areas to apply

You will find out how much the award is before you submit your \$900 deposit

It replaces AFX& General aid awards

What’s the Process:

- Student submits pre-app with \$75 fee
- Student completes scholarship app + cover sheet
- Student then completes application for their need and merit based scholarships
- Within one week of receiving the above materials, students will be notified of their award
- Student then needs to submit \$900 non-refundable deposit and complete full application to receive their scholarship

Questions:

If Students wants to apply for more than one scholarship, i.e. AFS Global Leaders Scholarships and Cargill, can they receive both?

No, they cannot receive both award, but they can choose the larger dollar amount award. If the larger dollar amount is, for example, Cargill, the money they would have received from AFS Global Leaders Scholarships will go back into the AFS Global Leaders Scholarship Fund and will be able to be accessed by another student.

#### MERIT-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

- Student submits nomination form
- Student receives credit in up to three of the following categories:
  - Academic Record Reference
  - Community Service Reference
  - Intercultural Involvement Reference
  - Comes from an AFS family

#### NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

- Family completes “FAST”
- Pays \$25 fee, for “FAST”, not for AFS (vouchers are available for extreme circumstances)
- Results are reviewed by AFS Financial Aid Committee

#### **How many students can we reach this way?**

AFS does not have an exact number of students that we will be able to reach at this time. This system is first come, first serve, so potentially students who apply early will be able to have more funds available. Two times the amount of money will be used.

#### **When is the funding Calendar?**

The funding calendar is based on the school calendar year. Funds are ready to be accessed now.

#### **What if the families’ economic status changes over the year?**

The may re-apply for the scholarship, both need and merit-based, however there is no guarantee that there will be more funds to give them depending on the time of the year they re-apply.

**Session:** 2009 Key Strategic Change- #2 Enrolling More Volunteer and Teacher Incentives: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

**Facilitator:** Amanda Fischer

#### **GLOBAL CONNECTIONS**

#### **What is Global Connections?**

Global Connections is a new rewards program for AFS registered volunteers, teachers and returnees.

**How does it work?**

Volunteers, Returnees, and Educators register online and nominate up to five students each year that they believe are good candidates for a study abroad program. Once the student fills out a pre-application and deposits the \$75 deposit fee, they will receive a \$75 credit to their account.

Session:

Facilitator: Melinda

**What motivates you to be an AFS volunteer?**

- The Students
- Families grow
- Hope for the future
- Great personal experiences students gain
- Great future opportunities for students

**Prospective Student Conversation Activity**

Volunteers and staff went around the room and commented on 6 pictures of students- their first impressions. Instead of using describing words, most comments were judgments based on physical appearance.

**What was learned from this activity?**

- Application photos for Host families are very important
- First impressions are important
- We cannot make prejudgments on people based on looks
- Do we ask students to smile in their application photos?

Session: 2009 Key Strategy #3: Being Present in the Venue and Communities of American teenagers

Facilitators: Amanda Fischer

Learning another language takes several months, and even can take years. The same is true for learning the language of the Digital Natives (people 24 and younger). 93% of Digital Natives confess that they use the internet for social interaction; therefore AFS must jump on the bandwagon to use this knowledge to our advantage.

**What are strategies and tools we can use to communicate more effectively with the Digital Natives?**

- Join existing AFS Facebook groups
- Start area and chapter Facebook groups
- Ask current AA's to write a blog
- Text message prospective students reminders about Pre-Departure Orientations, events, and deadlines
- Use and promote the AFS Fundraising Wiki

**Session:** Evolution of Volunteer Structure

**Facilitators:** Barb Kelly and Susan Rowley

**The goals of the new structure are:**

- Revitalize the existing volunteer force
- Empower volunteers as the decision makers

**Session:** 2009 Key Strategy #4: Improving Retention and preparation of Students and Support for Sending Families

**Facilitators:** Patti

1. In-home Candidate Interview: Essential Questions to Ask
  - a. Where do you want to go and why?
  - b. What do you want out of this for your child?
2. Interview Tips and Comments
  - a. Send two people to the interview. If possible one sending volunteer and a hosted student or returnee
  - b. Use silence and gaps to allow for more material to flow from the interviewee
  - c. Make it a two way conversation

\*Fire alarm\*

**Sunday, September 14, 2008**

8:30 Carolyn –Opening

Daily Feed back

- 1) the session that was the most useful for me was.....
  - ✓ scholarships \*\*\*\*\*
  - ✓ e-marketing \*\*\*\*\*
  - ✓ evolution of volunteers
  - ✓ global connections
  - ✓ all of them
  - ✓ state of sending
  - ✓ why do we do we do what we do
- 2) I'd like the facilitators to know.... ( sample comments –not all )
  - ✓ Loved Roberto's session
  - ✓ Appreciate staying on time and maintain structure
  - ✓ Please no icebreakers or energizers
  - ✓ This is really important training
  - ✓ You are well organized and knowledgeable
  - ✓ Great job \*\*\*\*\*
  - ✓ Learning a lot
- 3) Right now I am feeling..... ( besides tired )

- ✓ energized \*\*\*\*
- ✓ curious
- ✓ hopeful
- ✓ overwhelmed
- ✓ interested and motivated
- ✓ excited about doing sending and making it a stronger a stronger emphasis
- ✓ wondering if the changes are possibly unrealistic on volunteer realistic
- ✓ “I get it “ It’s all coming together
- ✓ ready to recruit students

**Session:** 2009 Key Strategy #5 Providing Tools for Volunteers

**Facilitator:** Jonathan Shakes

**Why are we changing?**

1. **We are changing to get rid of old technology and to synchronize between the different staff systems.**

**WIKI:** Provides a manual for volunteers. It is easy to find and edit, rather than to search in the AFSOnline library. It is a toll used both for registered volunteers and staff.

**SALESFORCE: new!**

Salesforce is improved software to store student data. Salesforce will be an easier way for AFS to track leads. As of now there are limited licenses, and thus two will be given to each Area Team. If there are very active chapters, adjustments can be made, and additional licenses can be purchased upon the discretion of the chapter and staff.

**GLOBAL LINKS: new!**

Global Links is the new software that AFS will be using for online full student applications. By having students submit full applications online, the paper trail will decrease and application review will take less time.

**Forms that must be scanned or faxed:**

- The **medical form** will still need to be printed off and brought to the doctor. Once signed by the physician the student will need to fax or scan that document and send with the rest of their application.
- Parent Page: The Signature will need to be scanned or faxed
- Volunteer Interview Review will ideally be typed up in the application as well. For this the volunteer must have a username and password. (Click on “Apply for Global Links)

Questions:

What is the URL for Global Links? Is it possible now to see global links?

**Suggestions:**

- A portal system for the volunteers on the home page of the Wiki to have a connection to every webpage they need, i.e. Global Links, Salesforce, AFSOnline etc.
- Get a universal password and login.

### **What happens on Sundays: A discussion on company rituals?**

What happens on Sundays? Church/ family time

What is our AFS ritual and what is our action or activity?

#### **Ritual Ideas:**

- Write an AFS song\*\*\*\*\*
- Selection Camp
- Fundraising Dinner
- Gateway Replacement
- Intercultural Theater
- High School Dance
- Intercultural Trivia Hunt

**BRAINSTORMING:** What could be the AFS ritual?

#### **Group #3 Ideas:**

- Massive interview day
  - Returnees make presentations about each country they lived in while potential students and families go to each booth and ask questions. Rotary uses this as a tool to interview students as well; however with the AFS policy of in-home interviewing, perhaps we could model this structure in some way. Rotary usually does a “Ra ra” beginning and a “Ra ra” end to tie the day together.
- Wrist band
- Celebrity Sponsor
- Sponsored students to repair after a natural disaster
- Race for Peace

#### **Top Ideas from Each Group**

- Race for Peace
  - Walk/Run/Roll with flags from all nations
- National Rally
  - A central location, or several locations at the same time
  - The same weekend every year
- World Cents for Scholarships
  - Coin drives at local schools
- AFS Night at minor league baseball game

## **ROUND TABLE DISSCUSSION: Schools**

- A. 15 minute Classroom Presentation: More info from Melinda Colquitt
  - a. Pre Class:
    - i. Write Returnees' names on board
    - ii. Write presenter's contact info on board
  - b. First pass out lead sheets to everyone and tell them not to fill them out
  - c. Talk about the mission and ambulance drivers
  - d. Possibly set up a competition between rival schools to see who can have more people go abroad
  - e. Talk about how unsophisticated Americans can be culturally and stress the importance
- B. Three Things To Know
  - a. Get to know a foreign language
  - b. Host an exchange student
  - c. BE an exchange students
- C. Cost, Scholarships, Credits vary from school to school
- D. Distribute catalogs to those who return lead sheets
- E. Advertise upcoming info session nights

### **Common Questions/Fears:**

- Learning another language
- Will I receive credit? Talk with your guidance counselor
- Will I have to do Summer School?

- E. After the presentation:
  - a. Mark the lead sheets (have teachers go through the list and tell who are qualified students)

### **Other Suggestions:**

- Make presentations to the School Board
- Present in Social Studies Classes because that will hit everyone, not just those learning a foreign language

### **General Suggestions about School Presentations:**

- Ask teachers before class which type of presentation they prefer, an AFS based presentation or a culturally informative based culture
- Bring in hosted and returnee students to talk
- Use personal experiences

### **Info Night Suggestions**

- At info nights, advertise free food (pizza or similar)
- Hold info nights in public libraries, churches, schools

- Set up an expectation that students will help once they return

**Advertise at:**

- Department Meetings
- Career fairs and club fairs pushing gap-year programs
- Church group meetings/ stress community service programs

**Global Connections:**

- Lunches promote global connections to teachers
- Put Global Connection flyers in teacher's mail boxes in high schools

**Session: What Local Chapters can do in schools with volunteers, students etc. to promote sending**

**Susan Rowley—facilitator**

Post- It - notes—individually –post on walls –group by categories/commonalities

**Advertising**

Write an AFS song\*\*\*\*\*

Media advertising

Present at local and regional conferences about global connections

Public service announcements

Articles in newspaper

Pre-movie ads

web-based media

Send catalogues to schools/ churches

Posters in libraries

Encourage facebook and facebook ads

Individually at career fairs about gap year

Global connections to teachers

Contact students via snail mail for ind recruiting

AFS post cards

Tech

Update my pages on the wiki

Ask a returnee to set up all students on wiki

Nurture leads using facebook

Ask a student or AA to make a blog

Familiarize self with new AFS tech tools

Let other volunteers know about tech changes

**Returnees**

Utilize returnee network

Use returnees as mentors

Invite returnees to join global connections  
Have returnees write articles or postcards to local media  
Sign up returnees to write article or postcards to local media  
    ✓ Sign up returnees at re-entry or end of end of stay meeting \*\*\*\*  
Set up returnees at re-entry or end of stay meeting  
Set up page on wake to show what they can do  
Ask them to do presentations  
Blogs –connected to web page  
Ask returnees to call leads  
Returnee event

### **Presentations**

Intro session for Team/chapter on motivating for sending  
    ✓ *Train people on presentations*  
Hosted students speak at meetings  
Ask unreped area volunteers to make contacts  
Ask hosted students to present to local organization  
Involve hosted students  
Social functions for aa's  
Increase # of info nights  
Involve hosted students

### **Schools (checkmarks designate top priorities)**

✓ *School presentations*  
School board presentations  
Have hosted student returnees present and give out catalogues  
✓ *Target counselors, teachers, principals, foreign language teachers*  
    ✓ *Point system*  
Reactivate dormant chapters/ schools  
Also connect with untapped schools  
Yearbook and newspaper /news letters /ads  
Start AFS/intl clubs  
Table at PTO conferences and colleges nights  
Posters in schools, esp scholarships, info  
Contact Intl schools  
Thank you gifts to school rep  
Hand deliver and follow up and set date